


INSTEAD
of
SOCIALISM

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INSTEAD OF SOCIALISM

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And Papers on Two
Democratic Delusions

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THE papers in this book were written at intervals during a period of four years from 1908 to the present year, and have appeared from time to time in *The Open Road*

INSTEAD OF SOCIALISM

INTRODUCTORY

JUST as 'Christians,' in all ages, have confused Christianity with what is not the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, so have Socialists confused Socialism with what is not Socialism.

In the following papers I have avoided attributing to Socialists sentiments which are no more peculiar to them than to many of their opponents. It is no argument to talk of Brotherhood and Altruism as characteristic of Socialism. It is likewise no argument to assert, as many Socialists do, that Socialism is synonymous with Christianity.

Socialists may, or may not, be brotherly and altruistic. They may, or may not, believe Christianity to be synonymous with Socialism. But all this does not define Socialism for us. It is as illogical to credit Socialism with the intentions and beliefs of some Socialists as to credit the Roman Church with the virtues of some of its saints.

Socialism is a politico-economic theory for the organisation of social life.

Its political proposals are : (1) That basic natural human rights do not exist ; (2) that the State gives to men all the rights they have. This implies the denial of the right of individuals to physical freedom, and to the possession of the products of their labour ; and conversely implies the right of the State to control individuals, and to appropriate and apportion the results of individual efforts.

Its economic proposals are : (1) That the land and all instruments of production should be held and organised by the State ; (2) that the distribution of the National Income should be decided upon by the State, either according to services rendered (the value of which would perforce be determined by the State), or according to individual needs (which again would be determined by the State), or according to a scheme of dead-level equality (manifestly unworkable because detrimental to the interests of State officials) ; (3) that co-operation of labour should be enforced to provide the National Income.

It is not difficult to infer from all this that Socialism would involve many subversive changes, which need not be considered here. The above definitions, when carefully considered, will be found to express what is involved in all theories of Socialism, and will enable the reader to understand what it is I am criticising.

I

SOCIALISM NOT SCIENTIFIC

IT is said by Socialists that Socialism is scientific. But can this be substantiated?

What is science? The word literally means knowledge; used technically, it means that knowledge which relates phenomena to laws of nature, *i.e.* relates effects to their proper causes. The object of science is to discover laws of nature and apply the knowledge of them to human activities.

No social system, therefore, can be scientific which ignores, or denies the existence of, the natural laws which underlie social phenomena.

Political economists admit natural law in the region of production, but when they come to the sphere of distribution, they, with very few exceptions, deny the existence of any natural law. The laws of distribution, they say in effect, are entirely man-made. And Socialists, although at enmity with the orthodox economists on most other points, are here at one with them.

Our social ills and miseries come from the same cause as all other ills, from the disregard of natural

law. Laws of man can be broken and set aside; they must be enforced by artificial penalties. But laws of nature cannot be broken; they may be ignored, but retribution is sure. We have ignored the natural law of distribution, and the result is apparent to the most superficial observer. Socialism seeks to remedy this evil, not by setting out to discover and abide by the natural law of distribution, but by devising and enforcing fresh and more numerous man-made laws. This is why I contend that Socialism is not scientific.

If one attempts to reason with the typical Socialist, he repudiates the idea of the operation of natural law in the distribution of wealth, until he is forced by a process of logic to admit that nothing really can happen without the operation of natural law. But he then proceeds to argue as follows: "Everything is a part of nature, everything is natural. Man is part of nature, and therefore everything that he does is natural. Therefore man-made laws are natural laws." This is equivalent to the following argument I once heard put forward by a meat-eater in order to prove that he was really a vegetarian: "I only eat animals that feed on grass, therefore I really live on vegetable food."

There are three great natural laws that it is necessary to understand and act in harmony with before we can attain to social welfare. They are as follow:

1. The law that all wealth is the offspring of the union of land and labour.

2. The law that men always seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion.

3. The law of justice.

The first law is a physical law. We cannot get wealth from land alone, because it is only the passive factor in production. We cannot get wealth from labour alone, because man could not even live apart from land (natural opportunities), let alone produce wealth. In order to produce wealth the active factor of labour must be applied to the passive factor of land. If a man merely takes away wealth produced by another, no matter by what fancy name he chooses to call his activity, he certainly is not a wealth producer. He is only a wealth appropriator.

The second law is a mental law. We should call a man *unreasonable* who went to the top of a hill to fetch a pail of water when there was a good clear stream flowing away at the foot. Of course, he might go up the hill to observe the view and carry down the water in order to strengthen his muscles. But then he would not only be seeking to satisfy his desire for water, but also his desire for æsthetic and athletic gratification.

The third law is a moral law. It is instinctively recognised that each man has a *right* to the proceeds of his own labour. This is the natural law of distribution, and to the extent that human by-laws, so to speak, are not in harmony with it the whole community suffers.

Production may be classed under three headings :

1. Agriculture or cultivation.

2. Manufacture or adaptation.

3. Commerce or exchange.

For all these land is needed. And man applies his labour in two capacities, as an individual and also as part of another and greater individual—the community. Differences in land values (economic rent or unearned increment), when they do not result from superiority of soil or situation, are created simply by the presence of men. The land of the City of London, for example, is valueless in itself. Millions of pounds in the form of ‘ground rents’ can be taken from the people upon it, only because they engage there in commerce. This wealth is communally created, and therefore, in strict justice, belongs to the community. This is the great natural law that has been ignored to our hurt, and which Socialists do not propose to recognise and abide by, but rather to ignore still further. It is true that they do propose that this ‘unearned’ increment shall be restored to the community which earns it. But they propose also to impose artificial laws; to nationalise the land and all the means of production, *i.e.* to curtail men’s freedom even more than it is curtailed at present. This is unscientific, because it is against nature, since freedom is naturally and instinctively desired.

John Stuart Mill says that the laws of distribution are of necessity man-made, because, the “things once there,” man can do as he will with them! The “distribution of things already there is determined entirely by human will backed by human force.” But, as Henry George shows, if the things

produced to-day were treated as the things produced centuries ago—the relics of past civilisations (revealed, say, by shifting desert sands), which could be picked up and appropriated by any passer-by—the result would be unthinkably disastrous. For the moment that the producers clearly saw that what they produced might be taken from them without their consent, production would cease.

The natural laws of distribution are not ignored openly. The best part of the produce of his labour is withheld from the producer by a multitude of subtle tricks and deceptions. It is withheld, not directly but indirectly, by interfering with production, not distribution. Direct interference with distribution is quickly noticeable. For instance, if £5 be due to a man and he only receives £3, it is quite clear to him that he has been robbed of £2. But if the reward of his labour is taxed during the process of production, and it is represented that only £3, not £5, is his just due, then it is not so easy to detect the robbery.

If the normal function of the social organism is interfered with, either directly through distribution or indirectly through production, it is inevitable that the supply of wealth will in the long run be diminished. In the human body there are organs which manufacture blood and there are organs which distribute it. It does not matter whether we disregard a law of nature by injuring the organs which produce blood, or divert from its proper course blood already produced, the result is the same : cessation of blood supply and

consequent illness or death. Equally true is it that to interfere with the natural laws of the distribution of wealth is to bring about illness or death to the social organism.

Socialism would strike at the very heart of civilisation by its meddlesome legislation for the distribution of wealth. And its proposals are none the less pernicious because associated with talk of altruism, brotherhood, and religion. We should not think a physician's lack of science was atoned for by good intentions and pious platitudes! Rather should we say that love to his neighbour could only be demonstrated through the proper understanding of the science that he was supposed to practise. And we should doubt his credentials, both as a religionist and scientist, if he told us that there were no such things as laws of nature applied to medicine.

Coming now to the second great natural law, we find that Socialists, in common with orthodox political economists, observing that men always seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion, assume universal selfishness to be the great fundamental principle of social economy. And Socialists justify their repudiation of competition and their proposals to substitute coercive co-operation for the natural subconscious co-operation, on the score that men need to be protected from one another's selfishness. But the assumption of universal selfishness does not necessarily follow from the universal law that men seek to economise time and energy by preferring, metaphorically speak-

ing, to fetch water from the nearest spring rather than from one farther off. It is true that in some men the instinct to act in harmony with this natural law has become perverted. They substitute for the action of going to the nearest spring for their water that of annexing tribute from the pails of their neighbours. Here what we call 'selfishness' comes in. It is not the fact of an action being performed for oneself that makes it what is ordinarily understood by 'selfish.' We do not dub a man selfish because he fetches his water from the spring at the foot of the hill instead of taking a wholly unnecessary journey to the top of it. We call him selfish only when he attempts to save himself exertion by stealing from his neighbours' pails, or when he refuses to share superfluous water with a neighbour too weak to take the necessary journey to the spring.

While all men have a *tendency* to be thus selfish, and some men are inordinately so, the majority of men have also a tendency to be what we call 'just,' 'honest.' That is to say, they are actuated by other motives apart from the desire to save themselves exertion at their neighbours' expense. They act in harmony with the instinct which impels them to economise their time and strength; but another instinct, the sense of justice, of orderliness, prevents them from allowing the first instinct to overstep its bounds—prevents them from stealing the water from the pails of their neighbours. And there is still more than this in human nature; there is sympathy, which leads a man to share the

contents of his own pail with the weak and needy neighbour.

Thus it may be seen that while it can be laid down as a fundamental principle that men *always* seek to go the shortest and easiest way to work, it cannot be said that men *always* seek to economise time and strength at the cost of violating the equally human instincts of justice, honesty, and benevolence.

Political economists generally, and Socialists in particular, have confounded a fundamental principle with one of the multitude of men's warring instincts, because at certain points the two seem to be identical, and much confusion of thought has resulted. So that Socialism, which owes a large part of its propaganda to the self-denial and benevolence of men actuated by sympathy for their fellows, actually denies the very existence of those sentiments while arrogating to itself the power to create them. And Socialism is said to be scientific !

II

SOCIALISM NOT THE REMEDY

THAT Socialism is not a cure for our social miseries, but is calculated to produce an aggravation of the disease, is what I hope to make clear to the reader in this and succeeding papers.

The remedy of the Socialist is, in some respects, analogous to that of the doctor who merely covers his patient's rash with an ointment, which drives

it in to work more subtle injury to the vital parts, instead of removing the cause of the disease and setting free the vital force to eradicate the effect. For what is the cause of the rash? Some impurity of the system which the vital force is trying to throw out and off.

Now, we cannot manufacture vital force; we do not even know what it is, and there is no substitute for it. The only sensible proceeding, therefore, is to help it when we are quite certain that we know how to; and to acknowledge our own ignorance, and refrain from running risks of hindering it when we are not quite certain. Above all things, we must cease taking in more impurities.

The true function of the physician is the discovery of the laws of health, not in the multiplying of prescriptions. The true function of a ruler lies, as Proudhon said, in the discovery of law, not in the making of laws.

It is our business to discover how the vital forces of society act, and then to remove the obstructions which clog and hinder their working. Above all things, we must cease taking in more moral impurities.

.

Now, the very first condition of existence is struggle. It will, I believe, be found that the final condition of existence is the cessation of struggle, by the substitution of universal free association, fellowship, and goodwill.

Man struggles first with Nature, then with his

fellows, and lastly with himself. All three forms of struggle are going on at one and the same time, and often in one and the same individual. The final struggle—that of man with himself—is the struggle to relinquish the struggle.

However immoral we may think the struggle in its second aspect—that of man with his fellows—we have to recognise that it *is*. It is to some, and amongst them those who are most involved, one of the very mysterious conditions of social life. To others, and amongst them those who are effecting the transmutation of energy, that is, shifting the struggle from the second to the third sphere, it is acknowledged to be a very satisfactory provision of Nature.

Man must always make conscious efforts if he is to live—physical efforts, mental efforts, and moral efforts.

Most readers are familiar with the incident in “*Dombey and Son*,” where Mrs. Dombey’s sister-in-law exhorts her to “make an effort.” But Mrs. Dombey couldn’t or wouldn’t “make an effort,” and so she died.

The incident is caricature, of course, but there is a great truth underlying it. Mrs. Dombey really needed some incentive to struggle to live. Most doctors are familiar with these cases—cases in which the patients *would* live if only they had some incentive; and other cases where patients *have* lived and recovered as by a miracle, because of their determination and effort to do so in spite of all the doctors in creation.

It is natural for man to struggle and natural for him to have an incentive to struggle. Take away his incentive to struggle, and the consequence will be mere selfish cessation of struggle, with resultant apathy and death. The moral incentive and effort to live, contradictory as it may seem, results in a man continually laying down his life for others. When this incentive and effort are fully manifested, such a man is called a saviour of the world, and one is reported to have said that he had power to lay down his life and power also to take it again.

As I have said, man's first struggle is with Nature. The incentive is his need and desire. For the furtherance of his existence and the gratification of his desires, he requires the constant provision of material things. Nature herself, apparently, independently of man's assistance or influence, makes bountiful provision for him in the fertility of the soil, in air, water, sunlight and climate. And these, together with man's capacity for increasing, adapting and distributing Nature's wealth, make up the supply of his demands, induced by the varying nature of his desire.

Man struggles with Nature for food, clothing and shelter, and he is so constituted that he naturally and inevitably goes the shortest and easiest way to work. If he did not go the shortest and easiest way to work the possibility of progress would cease. If a man walked a mile to fetch water from a river, when equally good and abundant water might be had from a stream a few yards

away from his cottage, we should regard him as an unreasonable waster of time and energy ; and unless he were satisfying some further craving of his nature by so doing, our opinion of him would be reasonable. (One could name instances where our regard might be superficial and wrong, and the so-called longest way, the shortest.)

The instinct to go the shortest and easiest way to work is implanted in the very animals. But man has acquired reason and has enlisted it in the service of his desire. He thinks that he has discovered that the shortest and easiest way to struggle is to force others to do all the struggling and then filch from them the proceeds. Thus the so-called shortest way proves the longest in that this employment of his reason, which is for a higher purpose, diminishes instead of increases that after which he is striving, namely, welfare.

It must be admitted that the sort of reasoning which makes out this pseudo struggle to be free competition is false ; but it nevertheless seems as sound to its devotees as Socialism does to Socialists, and quite possibly for the same reason, namely, that neither have seriously thought the matter out for themselves.

Free competition is wholesome and natural, say the supporters of the old order. For answer the Socialists point to the horrible state of present-day society, and argue that co-operation, not competition, is the only way by which men may obtain welfare. Competition — individualism — say the Socialists, is a case of every man for himself. They

are right ; it does mean that, but it also means something infinitely greater. Rockefeller is an individualist, and so was Jesus Christ.

The supporters of the old order and the Socialists are both right and both wrong ; the solution lies in the maintenance of a true equilibrium between competition and co-operation. I will try and explain what I mean.

I have said that the struggle necessary for life's maintenance may be divided into three parts : (1) man's struggle with Nature ; (2) his struggle with his fellows ; and (3) his struggle with himself. Now, there are two ways of doing everything, a right way and a wrong way. In the struggle with Nature there is a point up to which we may cultivate our fruit trees, for instance, with advantage and profit. But there is a point beyond that when, in greediness of gain and impatience at the slowness of Nature's methods, we may over-manure and over-force to such a degree that the resulting fruit ceases to be wholesome food for man.

The same thing obtains in the struggle with man. So long as two men have free and equal opportunities, the struggle of each to produce more potatoes, or a better table, than the other, is good and beneficial. It brings an added incentive to work—a higher incentive, too, than the mere desire to satisfy their need of food, clothing and shelter ; higher, not in the sense of being more altruistic, but higher in the sense of being more impersonal ; it is just one stage farther than the mere satisfaction of bodily needs. It acts bene-

ficially in another way also ; it 'speeds up,' 'sets the pace,' for the stupider, weaker, or lazier of the two. Understand, I am not referring to the horrible forced 'speeding up' of our present-day conditions. I am rather thinking of what happens when two children set out to compete as to which one can gather the most blackberries. The failure to come in first does not entail deprivation of blackberries, or even disappointment, among happy, healthy children. But the exhilaration consequent upon playing the game incites them to put forth their best powers. And it is only by putting forth our best powers that we can gain increase of power.

Now, what I have described is the *right* way of struggling, *real* free competition. But there is also a *wrong* way of struggling, the *pseudo* competition which obtains to day.

This method of competition is analogous to the action of a child who gets in first by the simple method of stealing the berries from its companion's basket, or by reason of superior strength ties his competitor's hands, or else prevents him, by force or trickery, from participating in the advantages of some particularly well-laden bush.

This is *not* free competition. It is the very antithesis of this.

What we need, and what we most emphatically lack to day is this very free competition which the orthodox economist tells us that we have got. We want to be free to freely struggle with Nature. But we are withheld from Nature—the land—on the one hand, while our hands are tied on the

other. Free competition implies equal opportunities for all. But while some men may own thousands of acres of land and hold them out of cultivation, when other men need to live and work upon them, while other men as a consequence may own the means of production against their fellows, and still other men may impose taxes upon people in order to do things which the people do not approve, it is folly to talk of freedom or free competition.

The remedy for all this iniquity and misery, however, is not Socialism ; at any rate not that Socialism which means the destruction of private enterprise. For Socialism, if it could ever be realised in its entirety, would entirely destroy that incentive to struggle upon which progress depends. It is only the very exceptional individual who will put forth the whole of his powers without any external incentive.

Socialists forget, or seem to forget, that there is a negative force in man as well as the positive desire to be up and doing. There is the force of inertia, a force with which every man has to struggle in himself. Under conditions where everybody was a State employee this force would impel him to do the minimum amount of work by which he could secure the maximum of salary, and after that he would have no incentive to do more.

But what about the incentive of duty, of altruism ? some may ask. When men put forth their powers out of altruism, or a sense of duty, they are beyond and outside of the supposed need

of State interference altogether. Men generally are not so altruistic and so dutiful, as witness our present awful social conditions. Among a mass of altruistic and dutiful people there could not be both superfluity and starvation. And it is not possible to make a man righteous or helpful by merely robbing him of the incentive to be otherwise. It is really not in the nature of things for a man with initiative and intelligence to take the same pleasure and interest in working as an employee in some large Government business, as he would in running his own little business. Given his choice, such a man would always prefer to take his chances of making a living and keeping his freedom, to a large and assured salary as an employee. I say *such* a man. There are others, of course, who really prefer the fixed wage, so it be large enough, and with the absence of responsibility. And under *free conditions* I do not see why they need have any reason to be disappointed with their conditions as employees. Such people are being more and more attracted to Socialism, seeing that it promises them the very thing they want, namely, a large wage, with freedom from worry. Even if it could fulfil that promise—and this is not at all certain—it is clear that “their liberties must be surrendered as their material welfares are cared for.”¹

Under present conditions a large majority of people are debarred from free competition and handicapped in the struggle with Nature. And

¹ Herbert Spencer.

Socialism proposes to remedy this state of things by handicapping all the rest. Instead of equalising *opportunities* by freeing those that are enslaved, Socialism proposes to equalise *conditions* by enslaving even those that are free.

Now, to deprive the 'strong' of the power and initiative to wrest more from Nature than the 'weak' is just as great an injustice as to deprive the 'weak' of the fruits of their labour. I know Socialists do advocate that State employees should not all be paid an equal rate per hour, per day, or week, or month, regardless of the work done. It may be that what they do advocate in this respect would be carried out. Nevertheless, it does not appreciably affect the main trend of their doctrine or destroy its devastating logic.

There is the third aspect of struggle to consider: Man's struggle with himself. The struggle with his own inertia I have mentioned, and I have indicated that it is not well to deprive him of the incentive of competition, ambition and responsibility. There is another struggle—the struggle between altruism and self-indulgence—the struggle, as I have said, against the struggle. What will the strong man do with the abundance of energy which enables him to produce more than the weak man and more than he needs? Will he spend it in aiding the weak, or ministering to his own lusts?

"From all according to their ability, to all according to their need." This is the ideal. But it will not be brought about by Socialism. It may be possible to deprive men of the power of taking

more than they need, and to compel them to work for what they do take. But no power outside of man himself can force him to use and give of his ability to the utmost. The real help which the weak get from the strong must and will always be voluntary. And under free conditions man does, for the most part, give and help, willingly, nay joyfully

III

SOCIALISM AND LAND REFORM

I SAID in the preceding paper that Socialism is not the cure for social miseries, but is itself calculated to produce an aggravation of the disease.

Now, what is the cause of our bad social conditions?

Speaking metaphysically, the root-cause of all suffering and misery is shown in the oldest philosophical teaching—the Vedanta—to lie in men's ignorance; lack of the knowledge of their own and Nature's underlying unity, which implies that the welfare of each is only attainable in the welfare of all, and therefore that not one man can be sinful, sorrowful, or suffering without all men being the worse for it.

A younger philosophical teaching—the Christian—shows the root-cause of suffering to lie in men's egoism; in perversity of will; in lack of that love which implies desiring and seeking the welfare of each in the unity of all, and therefore that men

could not see or know of the sin, sorrow, or suffering of another without seeking to help him.

The same truth is approached from two stand-points—the intellect and the will. True knowledge inevitably leads to love, and true love to enlightenment. The one bids us love our neighbour as ourselves, and the other gives us the reason for so doing, viz. that we are one with our neighbour, that our neighbour, in a sense, is ourself. It is only, therefore, by the communication of true knowledge and the manifestation of true love that it is possible to achieve real deliverance for the ‘captives.’

Be it noted that I say *true* knowledge and *true* love, for there is an ignorance that is more than mere negative lack of knowledge, namely, the positive ignorance of false knowledge. And there is more than the mere negative lack of love, and more even than the positive presence of malice and revenge, namely, the simulative love evidenced in mere pagan politeness, and the false care or protection of others evidenced in our ‘civilising’ institutions and schemes for social amelioration.

.

The root-cause of our bad social conditions, speaking materialistically, is the private ownership of the land, which carries with it the ownership of men.

The ownership of things is comparatively unimportant, for any accumulation of things beyond a certain quite moderate point is not only useless but positively inconvenient to a solitary possessor.

The possessions of an Eastern Potentate always included slaves, to guard, preserve, and recreate his possessions.

It is too often forgotten that Capital is perishable and needs constant preservation and renewal. That is to say, Capital, apart from Labour, is useless. One cannot keep sacks of corn for an indefinite period, and costly machinery will rust away if not attended to.

The possession of more wealth than the owner can utilise for his immediate needs is only advantageous if it includes the possession of power over other men. Two spades are of no use to a man unless he has a slave whom he can force to use the second spade, or a friend who renders voluntary service.

But what about money ? it may be asked. That, surely, is advantageous to the individual and may be stored up indefinitely ? Precisely, money is the medium of exchange and the symbol of power. Apart from this it is useless. One cannot eat, drink, wear and take shelter under money. At the most it could only be melted down and fashioned into metallic utensils.¹

Now, there is no way of getting into possession of money except either by exchanging something for it, or by robbery, or by gift. And there is no method of obtaining commodities apart from producing them, stealing them, or receiving them as gifts, unless one has the money to exchange for them.

¹ In a future book it is proposed to consider more fully the question of money.

And since the possession of superfluous wealth is useless apart from the possession of power over other men, and property in land which is necessary for them to work upon in order to produce wealth, the real struggle is for land and money.

In tracing back how the present state of society arose, our economists are fond of imagining an empty world upon which one man suddenly appears and pre-empt the best site, which he promptly stakes round and claims as private property to be used, let, or bequeathed, by right of priority of appearance.

Although private property in land did arise in this way to some extent, in America for instance, it is more commonly based upon what is called 'the right of conquest.' That is to say, it follows upon murder and robbery, supplemented by the gentle practice of 'enclosing,' which we know obtains to this day.

But however private property in land arose, it is quite obvious that the first comers, whether colonists or conquerors, would pre-empt the most valuable sites. After the best land was all taken, other aspirants to the use of land would have to be content with land of the second quality. That is, less advantageous land, either from the point of view of soil if wanted for agriculture, or situation if wanted to live upon or conduct exchange transactions, or perhaps of both if wanted to pursue those manufacturing industries which, to be profitable, require both.

It is obvious that as soon as this state of things

obtains land begins to have *value*. If A can obtain an income of £500 per annum, say, on the best land, while B, with equal exertions, can only make £300 on the second-best land, it is obvious that B will lose nothing if he rents the first plot from A at £200 per annum. Not only does he not lose, he gains in pleasantness of situation, nearness to society, etc.

This difference in land values, arising out of the fact that Nature gives unequal returns to equal exertions, is 'unearned increment'; it is not produced by A or B, and the only reason that A pockets it if working his land himself, or takes it from B and retires as an 'independent gentleman,' is in the fact that he got there first.

When with increasing population all the land is 'owned' there is nothing for the next comer except one of two things. If he has inventive genius he may hit upon a plan by which he can make the soil more productive than some working occupier. In that case it will pay him to rent the land. If not he must starve, unless some one in possession of land, either as owner or tenant, sees it to be worth while to buy his services. Thus, with still increasing population, he eventually becomes a wage slave, to be had for nothing beyond his bare subsistence, like a cow or a horse. In fact, cows and horses are much more mercifully considered than some men, because they are not so easily obtained.

The same thing happens, therefore, with *us as* happened under the Eastern Potentates, only in

place of slave owners we have landlords and capitalists. We have changed the name but not the thing. Men are now called free, but are still as mercilessly 'owned' as ever. We have apparently only progressed in a circle.

I say apparently, because the progress is real after all. The apparent circle is really the round of a spiral, and though we may seem to come back to the point from whence we started, we have really mounted one grade higher. For this very change of name, which repudiates the contention that some men are enslaved by others, is tantamount to the acknowledgment that they ought not to be so enslaved. It is this acknowledgment that is going to undermine the foundations upon which the power of the slave owner rests.

Men no longer own slaves, they own land and the means of production : Land and Capital, apart from which Labour is helpless. How can a man be said to own himself, to be free, when the bare means of subsistence is obtainable only by obtaining permission to work on land owned by some one else, with tools or machinery owned by another, at the price of surrendering the produce of his labour in return for the minimum amount upon which he can live the life of an animal and reproduce his kind ?

The remedy of the Socialist is to nationalise the land and all the means of production. In place of some men working on land and with tools owned by other individuals, all men must work upon land and with tools owned by the whole

people. Which means, in other words, if it does mean anything, that they must be owned by bodies of officials. It is not only land and Capital that will be nationalised, but, seeing that men cannot live apart from these two, it is Labour also that will be nationalised. How is the slave freer because he is owned by a million men in place of one? Rather is he the greater slave. From one man he might escape, but from a million men escape is wellnigh impossible.

What does it matter that he has a millionth share in the ownership of all the rest: in other words, a vote? It does not make him a proprietor, and if it did it wouldn't make his title right; it only means that he, a slave, sanctions slavery. He is, therefore, a self-constituted slave. With rare exceptions he is always at the mercy of leaders, who in nine cases out of ten are people who have risen to the position of leaders out of the mere lust for power, apart from any real desire to serve those they lead.

We know this is so. We know that nine out of ten leaders are more or less corrupt and self-seeking. (I admit there may be wide stretches of difference between the more and the less.) What guarantee, therefore, can we have for the future? How can there be safety apart from freedom?

The Socialists have fallen into two great errors, made two gigantic blunders. One is, strangely enough, the very error they attribute to the Christian idealists. They say to the latter, "Your ideals may be all very well a million years hence, when men have changed their natures and become

altruistic and loving ; they fit well into the scheme of things that may obtain at the millenium, but they won't wash now. We have to deal with men and things *as they are*."

Now, as men *are* at present, it is notorious that even private individuals do not always find it easy to be wise, sincere and disinterested. But the temptations of the private individual seem to become multiplied a hundredfold when he becomes an official. Whether it is that the official really has more temptation to insincerity and dishonesty than the private individual, or whether it is that the potential sinner is more prone to compete for official posts, it is perhaps difficult to say, but the results are the same.

It may be argued that wise and enlightened people, such as Socialists, will only vote for the really wise, sincere and disinterested people among them. But a *very* wise man has said that hypocrisy is the one sin that can deceive even angels.

The second error, the second gigantic blunder of the Socialists, is the way they have confused cause and effect. The source of our social miseries they assert lies in the private ownership of land and capital. And their efforts are ostensibly directed equally against both. I say ostensibly, for really they are directed only against Capitalism, because the landlord is in a far more unassailable position.

"The struggle for the land," said an eminent Socialist, "will come last. Meantime, while we cannot get all we *want*, we will take all we *can*."

But a wise physician, who understands that the cause of his patient's delirium is alcohol or opium, concentrates his attention upon weaning him from the alcohol or opium in the quickest and safest fashion. He may indeed advocate a few other remedial and palliative measures alongside of this. But he never loses sight of the main fact ; never confuses effect with cause, and never diverts his main energies and attention from it.

2 Now, Capitalism, as it exists to-day, is not a cause so much as an effect—the effect of landlordism, and in the term Landlordism I here wish to be understood to include *Manlordism*. Get rid of Capitalism in one place, and like the rash driven in by the quack, it will appear under a new name, as a different disease, in some other part of the body politic.

We need to direct all our energies against the cause of the rash—the cause of Capitalism—the cause of the power that the few have to enslave the many.

I know that the land cannot be freed all at once. Socialists do not expect to get Socialism all at once. Revolutions are as unnatural as the helleborism of the ancients and are followed by as deadly reactions. You cannot cut the knots without destroying the string. The knots which Capitalism has tied will come undone, one by one, and little by little, as the land becomes free. Free, not to be merely cut up into small plots of private property, in the place of large ones, as some anarchists vainly contend, but unowned even by the individuals who work upon it. Unowned but not

unpossessed; held in undisturbed possession by the occupier, who will pay into the common stock its real rent, economic rent—the unearned increment which accrues to him, not from his labour, but from advantages of soil or situation which he did not create.

The nationalisation of the land will come last, say the Socialists; that is to say, when the majority of men are no longer slaves of a minority of private individuals, but of a minority of public officials. Still slaves, but slaves whose last state would be worse than their first, if such a thing could ever really come to pass.

If it could—but things fortunately don't work out in real life as they seem to theoretically when driven to their logical conclusions. Science teaches us that a ball thrown into the air tends to travel on through space for ever and ever. But in actual fact the force of gravity comes along to pull the ball back to earth before it gets out into space. Thus Individualism will hold back Socialism from working itself out to its logical conclusions.

IV

THE SINGLE DUE¹

THE cry of the Socialist is a contradictory one. It is for equal opportunity for all to make a living and also for State control. It is asking

¹ This paper, which first appeared in *The Open Road* for March 1909, is printed also as an Appendix to a book by Mrs. Ethel Wedgwood, entitled "Tolstoy on Land and Slavery" at Tolstoy's request.

for freedom and slavery, both. While it can be taken for granted that the vast majority of Socialists are sincere in their cry for equal opportunity for all to live, it is certain that the methods they countenance are a menace to its accomplishment.

'Livings' (food, clothing and shelter) come from man's labour applied to land (natural resources), so that it is obvious that there can be no equal opportunity apart from equal opportunity to use land—whether for agriculture, manufacture, or exchange. In order that this should be not merely in name, but in fact, it is necessary that men should have the right to use the land freely, without State interference or control ; be free to reap the reward of their labour, whether it be more or less, according to their strength and intelligences ; not to have their wages regulated and hours controlled by a body of officials for whom there can be no guarantee that they will act either wisely or justly, and who are no more likely to be elected by wise and just majorities than they are at present.

There is only one way in which men's opportunities to earn a living may be equalised and at the same time their freedom preserved. It is by the restitution of land values to the people and the abolition of all rates and taxes. It is a misnomer to call this a single tax. A man is not taxed who yields value for something which belongs to everybody. He is a robber if he refuses to pay. It is due from him.

It is a right of every man that he should have a

share of the land. It is robbery if he appropriates that increase in land values arising out of the presence of many people, the superiority of one situation over another, the superiority of one kind of soil over another, or the existence of useful minerals underneath. The natural law of association demands the pooling of these differences and their appropriation for common needs. This is not taxation, it is equalisation. Taxation is imposition, therefore 'single tax' is a wrong term. It should be called the single due.

The acceptance of this principle and the restitution of this right would result in, among other things, the following :

1. The lowering of the prices of all products of labour.

2. The abolition of landlords.

3. Employment for everybody.

4. The raising of wages.

5. The abolition of large and idle capitalists.

6. The abolition of usury and spurious interest.

The practicability of this is very simple. The difficulty in the way is men's ignorance, which is the root-cause of their misery.

It is the presence of a vast collection of people in our 'great city' that causes land roundabout the Bank of England to be valued at millions of pounds, while the same quantity in an Essex district, only forty minutes' train journey away, is valued at £25 per acre. Thus every city presents the paradox of men paying excessive rents for land which their presence makes valuable

It is the exorbitant rents—unearned increments—that should be paid to the community instead of to individuals. It may very easily be seen that the enormous revenues thus obtainable would suffice for all public uses and communal needs, thus making the imposition of rates and taxes wholly unnecessary. The inevitable result of this would be, on the one hand, decrease of prices, and, on the other, increase of purchasing power.

Landlordism, which is the holding of land for extortion and not for use, would become abolished, because landlords would have to hand over to the community the whole of the unearned increment they were receiving from their tenants. Seeing also that it would no longer pay to either allow land to remain idle or even neglect to use it to the best possible advantage, there would be created an enormous demand for labour of all kinds, which would result, as the originator of the single tax idea shows, in the phenomenon of employers competing with one another for labour instead of, as at present, men competing for employment.

The outcome of this would be that the income of employees would be very little less than that of employers. The difference between the wages of employers and employees would probably not be anything like so great as the difference between those of the workers and the State officials under Socialism. Because natural ability, *not party influence* or political jugglery, would regulate them.

The large capitalist class would inevitably disappear, because an individual cannot become

possessed of capital that he does not earn, that is, capital to any large extent, except by appropriating unearned increment or by obtaining a monopoly of some commodity or trade.

Monopoly, which is the power of pricing an article regardless of its value, would be impossible under the single tax (due) except by special legislation prohibiting people with free access to the land from setting up competitive industries.

But what about interest—usury—the Socialist will ask. Usury will cease to exist. Interest may or may not remain according as the community find it convenient or not.

Interest in the real sense of the word is to-day confounded with—

1. Profits of monopoly.
2. Profits filched from wages; *i.e.* dividends.
3. Usury.
4. Spurious interest.

Interest is that particular increase, says Henry George, “which, though it generally requires labour to utilise it, is yet distinct and separable from labour—the active power of Nature.” It is true that all capital is *not* increased by the forces of Nature. But on the other hand, seeing that in every community the members use both species—that is, capital which the forces of Nature do and do not increase—a pooling of benefits is found to be to the advantage of all, and thus interest strikes an average.

In a series of articles entitled, “The Earth for All,” which it is hoped will shortly appear in book

form, the justice of interest is illustrated by two typical cases.

A calf, borrowed from one man by another in order to improve the value of his field by eating the long grass and manuring the land, will return at the end of six months a cow, not a calf. A man who borrowed a plough from another, in order to save the trouble and time of making or the expense of buying one, would in fairness have to return not only a new plough or make good the depreciation, but share with the lender the advantages of a superior crop owing to a week's earlier sowing.

Usury is money paid for the use of capital over and above its real increase, and could only be extorted from people who have already been deprived of their free access to natural resources.

Spurious interest is that paid on capital which has long ceased to exist, a good example of which is the case of incomes derived from government bonds, representing capital long since blown away out of the mouths of cannons. The money received by the holders of such bonds is not interest, but the proceeds of taxation.

The 'single due' system is one which is applicable to all states of society—to a society which suffers an armed government to enforce payment or one in which there is sufficient common sense to realise in what direction the best interests of men lie. It is a system which will not allow millionaires on the one hand nor paupers on the other. It will combine all the advantages promised by Socialism with

the freedom we are supposed to get, but do not, under so-called individualism.

True it is that in a society from which an armed government extorts taxes there will be much more difficulty in establishing such a system, than in one where common sense prevails. Probably, the disappearance of violence would be in proportion to the advance of such a system. That is very likely the reason why Socialist leaders and collectivists generally object to what is called the taxation of land values—because it is the most difficult to obtain and the most likely to reduce governmental activity. The single tax (due) is certainly not easily to be wrung from a Parliament which is based upon landlordism and ‘vested interests.’ It can only be established by the force of public opinion. And is not public opinion that which our legislators tell us to appeal to in order to bring about any reform? Then why not concentrate on that work? Let the people beware of sophistical arguments about getting other things first. Getting other things first means the expenditure of the same energy as in getting the right thing. Thus in addition to wasted energy the people saddle themselves with heavier burdens in the form of increased rents, rates and taxes, which are piled up as their labour increases and these ‘other things’ are procured. They had better by far do without the benefits and concentrate on this radical reform.

The cry of the small investor is usually brought in to re-enforce the arguments against the single

tax. It is said that under a system of Land Nationalisation he would be compensated, but that, by the single tax system his property would be confiscated. Which, of course, is ridiculous. The small investor who has purchased land for use would be benefited, not injured by the system. He would pay less in land-value-due than he does now in rates and taxes. It is the large investor, who has purchased for profit,—for extortion and not for use—who would be affected. And no real injury would be inflicted on him, since he would be given the opportunity of becoming a human being and not a parasite ; he would be deprived of the power to live idly upon the backs of others. It is astonishing how quick politicians are to talk of injury when it is a question of depriving land holders and monopolists of their immoral privileges. But what about the injury that these privileges are inflicting upon the millions of men whose miseries are periodically the subject of congresses and royal commissions, which can only advocate selling them piecemeal, through the channels of semi-private ‘charity,’ or right out to the State ?

To effect any real reform there is need for a “new philosophic fulcrum”—a new social principle—a new motive of action—capable of sustaining all social activities. We are afflicted in mind, body and estate ; we are living in the midst of great disturbances—religious unrest, social misery and political bankruptcy. The failures of false theories and treacherous practices confound us.

We are already moving out into a new life, but with doubt and uncertainty, notwithstanding that many are rallying round a new standard, symbolising a new social order based upon liberty and fraternity.

There is a great need for a centric philosophy—one which recognises that all real reforms begin at the centre and not upon the circumference of human life. And yet it is the advocacy of this which is most likely to call forth the charge of eccentricity.

V

THE PROCEDURE OF WISE RULE

ALTHOUGH it may not be counted unto me for righteousness by many for saying so, it is just at the point where ethical principle and economic law are applied to human conditions that the principle and the law part company with Socialism. I single out Socialism for criticism because it is painfully evident that the other old and thoroughly tried political systems must have long since separated from principle and law. And also, because Socialists sincerely profess to have regard for ethical principles, it is necessary for all who perceive the discrepancy to endeavour to make it known, even at the risk of antagonising those good people who are likely to construe one's disagreement with their methods into repudiation of their aim.

It almost goes without saying that the intentions

of Socialists are in the main good—viz. to uplift humanity, equalise opportunities, and secure freedom. Nevertheless, the political activity known as Socialism is in the main bad—viz. in the direction of restriction and State tyranny. Something more than good intentions is needed if we are to save ourselves from conditions by no means remote from that region, the road to which we are told is paved with good intentions. We need wisdom as well as love if social life is to be commensurate with well-being.

We have had despotic monarchies—the government of the many by one. We have had and have still what we call constitutional government—the government of the majority by a minority. It is mistakenly termed Individualism, the principle of which is said to be exhausted, whereas we have only witnessed the consequences of a contrary principle or lack of principle, viz. Protectionism.

Socialism proposes majority or democratic government, *i.e.* taking the power away from one set of officials and transferring it to another set (or perhaps giving it back to the same set), elected by the votes of the people.

Already there are ominous signs which foretell a coming revelation that this state of affairs will be no improvement on its forerunners. It will be slavery sanctioned by universal suffrage. People who profess and call themselves Socialists are unwittingly allying themselves with forces which are killing out the very things they are seeking, viz. liberty and equality of opportunity.

If, as the banners of the pitiable processions of poor men proclaim, Socialism *is* their only hope, then their case is hopeless indeed.

Anarchy—the negative state of no rule—has been proposed as a further remedy, but men instinctively feel that even a bad rule is better than none at all. The danger of anarchism is, as Mazzini points out, that by concentrating merely upon individual desires, progress is abandoned to the arbitrary rule of an unregulated and aimless liberty.

Freedom is what all men desire, and paradoxical as it may seem, freedom is only found in obedience : in obedience to *That* “whose service is perfect freedom,” as the old prayer says. Not in obedience to man-made laws, as Socialists erroneously teach ; nor in yielding to our own desires, as some anarchists vainly contend ; but in Thearchy—the rule of God.

I am here confronted with the danger of being misunderstood by many, because the words “service of God” have been perverted and misused to such a horrible extent, and convey to so many minds nothing but the idea of performance of rituals and obedience to priests, all of which is rather the service of that mythical personage called the Devil.

If you ask me what I mean by God, I am inclined to reply that He is the supreme principle of the universe—the First Cause. If you ask me how I know, I should reply that I explain Him through the first principle of myself, viz. my soul, which is known to me. But to amplify all this would mean a lapse into metaphysics, which is not my intention.

It is more correct, perhaps, to say that I do not know. After all, we know no more what we mean by God than we know what we mean by electricity.

"The true function of the statesman," said a great but unpopular writer, "is to discover law, not to make laws." This is the key to a Thearchical government—the foundation upon which the Thearchical commune of the future will rest. The idea is not a new one. So far as we have any records, it originated with that great law-giver, not law-maker, Moses; but it is a truth which must always have been known to the wise men of all ages.

It is to be noted that Moses never prefaced a command with "Do this because it is my will, or the State's will, or the will of the majority," but "*Do this and ye shall live.*" For this is the Law! Whose law? Literally nobody's law. Thus saith the Lord God, the Law-maker whom the ancient Israelites did not define but called the "I Am." If the use of the word is objected to because of its anthropological associations, then we can just as easily call it Nature's Law.

The Thearchy of Moses was naturally not perfect. In the light of what modern revelation—modern science, if the word is used in its real sense—has to teach us, it can be very much improved upon. Nevertheless, it succeeded in making a remarkable nation for time, and a virile race seemingly for eternity, since no amount of oppression and persecution has succeeded in annihilating it. And the whole structure of that wonderful old government rested upon that simple foundation, "Thus

saith Nature, Do this and ye shall live." And a successor to that wonderful man Moses foretold what would happen when the Israelites forsook their Thearchical government and followed the example of the nations round them by instituting kingship. It was the beginning of the end so far as the nation was concerned, notwithstanding that the space between the beginning and the end was a wide one.

The system of Moses had its weakness and mistakes ; it bore within itself the seeds of its own destruction. But then every human system must pass away and be replaced by others. They are not like the laws of the Medes and Persians.

God's law does not change, but no one time or man can comprehend the whole of it. Jesus added to the revelation of Moses and corrected his mistakes. And adherence to His teaching would eventually have restored the temporal welfare as well as added to the spiritual greatness of the Israelites. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these temporal blessings shall be added unto you. He did not insinuate that the righteousness and rule of God related to a life apart from this, but that it is only by obedience here and now to God's government—His Kingdom upon earth—that true welfare is attainable. *The meek shall inherit the earth*—not the tyrant nor the slave.

Moses discovered laws of Nature and taught them to the people. After that he made one big mistake : he instituted a system by which they were to be *enforced* by men upon one another. In

reality, men cannot be forced by others to do God's will. Force—punishment, which is simply man's vengeance—may temporarily suppress the external manifestations of evil, as a suppressive ointment may drive in a rash, to work more deadly and subtle mischief. Men can be *helped* by others to see and do God's will, but not compelled.

Jesus said, "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it." He also said, "Salvation is of the Jews," *i.e.* salvation is of those who worship the Unity. But he denied the punitive measures of the Jews by saying, "Resist not him that is evil, but overcome evil with good." This was the addition that the Jews rejected and for which He was crucified.

It was not patriotism that made Jesus say that salvation is of the Jews, nor sentimentalism that evolved the rule to "do good to them that hate you." It was science. Jesus was a scientific man among other things; he saw that Thearchy was the only form of government to make a happy and prosperous people. In addition he put his finger on the great mistake of Moses.

The essential difference between the Divine law, which Jesus enunciated, and the caricatures which men in their ignorance make of it, is that whereas with the latter men are brought into subjection to the laws, in the former case they put themselves into unison with the *law*.

We cannot escape law of some sort, and there will always be government of some kind. If a man were alone, so far as human beings are con-

cerned, upon a desert island, he must even then govern himself if he would live. He must keep in check the forces of inertia which tempt him to laziness when he has no real need of rest; gluttony, which might tempt him to overfeed upon the luscious fruits he might find growing, with the possible consequences of illness or death; cruelty to animals, the remote result of which might be mutilation or death at their hands.

It is somehow inherent in man's nature that he is constantly tempted to do things which at the time gratify some desire, but which in the long-run react to his disadvantage. There *is* a law of life which man must discover and obey if he would live. Just as there are laws of musical harmony which must be discovered and obeyed by one who desires to be a musician.

The solitary musician needs no one to beat time for him. But directly he would perform in harmony with others, a *conductor* is necessary.

The conductor beats time, and every performer, by taking his time from the same leader, is thus enabled to keep in harmony with his fellow-players. In addition, the conductor signals to each performer when to come in or drop out, and indicates also the appropriate intrusion of loud or soft tones, etc. Very often the conductor is teacher, and can play every instrument in the orchestra. He is, or *should* be, the wisest and most experienced musician of them all. He is the teacher, guide and leader of the rest. But let it be remembered that, however proficient a musician and wise a

conductor a man may be, he cannot produce harmony out of the orchestra unless the laws of harmony are recognised by the individual players, and the love and knowledge of music inherent in their souls, or, rather, consciously proceeds from them, for it *is* inherent. *Given* this, and the conductor can be of service.

This does not include the slavery of the members of the orchestra to the conductor, or even blind and slavish obedience? By no means! Every member has a copy of the musical score; all are acquainted with laws of harmony. At a pinch each one of them could conduct more or less well. If the conductor does not conduct properly, does not render his part of the communal performance well, the orchestra will naturally choose another leader. The conductor is only chosen because of his *efficiency*, and only rules by virtue of his service. He is conductor *not* by heredity, but by divine right. He rules not by material but musical power.

The function of the true ruler is exactly analogous to that of the conductor. Rulers and leaders have a definite function and are necessary. There is just this difference, however, that whereas few orchestras will tolerate indifferent and bad conductors, the people do tolerate indifferent and bad, that is false, rulers.

Perhaps there is some good reason why they do, until such time as they are able to control themselves. Otherwise the oppressed would have risen long ago and murdered the masters and instituted what is called anarchy. But men seem to feel

instinctively that anything is preferable to that. The instinct of law and order is as keen and strong as the instincts of self-preservation and reproduction, and serves and defeats its own end as effectually. In all ages men through ignorance and indifference have tolerated bad rulers rather than no rulers.

The real and rightful ruler, however, is he who discovers and teaches law which is eternal and not man-made. He is the server, not the enslaver, of men. He demands and takes nothing that is not voluntarily pressed upon him. If he appears to have privilege beyond the rest of men, it is accorded him in much the same spirit as many loving children voluntarily yield to a good mother the easiest chair or softest cushion. "It is for mother, because she works so hard and does so much for us."

There are, then, natural spheres of leadership reciprocally occupied by men in accordance with their culture, and with which the State is impotent to interfere. Any man of superior wisdom compels the adherence of those others who are seeking it. Directly he presumes to conjecture what is good for them and attempts by artificial means to control them, he loses his wisdom, diminishes his natural power and steps into false relations.

Man has always and will always instinctively or intuitively yield to the influence of natural leaders, just as children yield cheerfully to the authority of wise parents. The State, as we understand it, abhors natural leaders, and when it cannot convert them into politicians, statesmen and tyrants,

persecutes them, or, what is more common in these days, causes them to be unheeded.

Natural instincts seem inevitably to become perverted. Directly men begin to reason selfwards and to find that a certain situation is attended with particular advantages or delights, they seek to attain to the situation, to assert a sovereignty apart from use or service. Disaster inevitably follows. Just as drunkenness, disease, and weakness follow upon the abuse of the food and sex instincts, so slavery and oppression follow upon the abuse of the ruling instinct.

If we would have harmony in social life, we must substitute the conductor's baton for the policeman's truncheon.¹

¹ See "The Master Keys of the Science of Notation," by Mary Everest Boole.

TWO DEMOCRATIC DELUSIONS

INTRODUCTORY

THE people of this country are governed by words and epithets. The same words are used in more senses than one. And one of the keys to the mystery of the fact that vast multitudes of the people are subjugated and exploited by the few is this further fact, that words are so often understood in one sense by the general public, while they really stand for something else in the minds and intentions of the rulers.

Take, for example, the word 'free.' It is a word that never fails to evoke enthusiasm and response on the part of the crowd. Freedom is the goal of every man's desire, and such phrases as 'Free Education' and 'Free Trade' are among the most powerful weapons in the armouries of astute politicians. But such phrases really stand for the very antitheses of their literal meaning. 'Free Education' is neither free in the sense that it can be had for nothing, nor yet in the sense that it can be freely taken or left. The right name for it is 'Compulsory Education,' for the people are first of all compelled—directly or indirectly—to pay for it, and then compelled to submit their children to it, even although they may be certain that such submission is to the children's detriment. It is not education and it is not free.

It may be argued that no one fails to understand the official meaning of the term 'Free Education.' Perhaps! But nevertheless the crowd is lured by the sound, in spite of vaguely apprehending the sense in some remote corner of its mind.

Again, take the phrase 'Free Trade.' We may commonly hear the assertion that we have free trade in England. But we have nothing of the kind. 'Free Trade' technically means freedom from the imposition of taxes upon goods imported into this country. But a large proportion of our government revenue comes from import duties. The phrase, 'Free Trade,' then, does not mean free trade, but merely that we impose duties upon certain imports not for 'protective' purposes, but 'only' as a means of obtaining revenue. The right name for this system is certainly not 'Free Trade.' If we take the words in their literal sense, the case is still worse, because very few people are free to trade in any way.

It is the same with the word 'Protection.' It conveys to the hypnotised mind of the labourer, whose only instruction comes from the would-be M.P. (and those in his pay or under his patronage) who solicits his vote, the idea that he is to be 'protected' from the foreigner. If foreign goods are made 'dearer' by the imposition of duties upon them, people will buy the cheaper home products, with the result that there will be more work and better wages for British workmen. This is what the protectionist workman fondly believes, not understanding that the person pro-

tected is not the labourer, but the exploiter of labour. The labourer forgets that he is a consumer as well as a producer, and that he would be thereby prevented from *buying* cheaply as well as producing cheaply. And he forgets, although he suffers from the fact in this case, that a rise in wages is not a rise in wealth, because the price of food rises too. What the labourer needs is not protection, but to be quit of parasites. His labour is his protection, every man's task being, as Emerson said, his life-preserver.

Consider the words Self-government and Co-operation. Many people believe that the former is to be obtained by means of the ballot-box, and the latter through that form of collectivism known as Socialism. These are the two democratic delusions that we will consider in the following pages.

(1) *THE COLLECTIVIST DELUSION*

I

COLLECTIVISM AND CO-OPERATION

SO many people think that Collectivism (or Socialism) and co-operation mean the same thing, and they generally attach to the words ideas of benevolence and altruism ; while the word individualism is always associated in their minds with ideas of tyranny and selfishness. Now it is certain that most civilised men refrain from organising themselves under systems known either as Collectivism or Socialism. And it is equally

certain that civilised men do *not* refrain from co-operation. The two words that are virtually synonymous are co-operation and civilisation. The tendency of human progress seems to have been away from, rather than towards, Collectivism. We may read of the collectivism of savage tribes, but as civilisation proceeded we find that 'Individualistic' systems arose. Whilst the property of the community consisted simply of such things as slaughtered game and stacks of wood, which could be obtained by any one from the natural resources all around him, Collectivism was easy and natural. But as soon as the wealth of the community started to consist of things not collected, but produced by individuals, the questions of private property, of justice, would inevitably arise. 'This is *mine* because I made it.'

There is a natural collectivism and a natural individualism, and social prosperity is obtained neither by one nor the other *alone*, but by the maintenance of a natural balance between the two. Men have a natural *right* to private property in things that they make ; but private property in things which no man can make, land and natural resources, must inevitably spell exploitation and injustice.

Doubtless the chief factor in the progressive life of savages is their power to produce, just as the chief factor in the progressive life of civilised men is the co-operation of their individual productive powers.

Every individual is primarily interested in the

satisfaction of his needs and desires with the minimum of exertion. Civilised man has discovered that his power to produce is enormously increased by co-operation. True it is that the exploitation of the many by the few is facilitated by the very fact of co-operation. But Socialism, instead of tending towards minimising, bids fair to actually increase, this exploitation, because of its concentration upon perfecting the co-operative machinery, without undermining the monopoly of natural resources. The altruistic sentiments of Socialists are indeed exploited for the furtherance of oppression and privilege. And the Socialists know it not. Just as priests exploit the truly religious sentiments and practices of the people in order that the glory thereof may be reflected upon a corrupt Church. And the Christians know it not.

Now, the natural law of production is that men seek to satisfy their desires with the least amount of exertion. Co-operation is in harmony with this law, because, by reciprocal services, men are able to create a maximum of satisfaction with a minimum of exertion. Given, then, equal opportunity for all, which is also in harmony with natural law, the civilising and co-operating tendencies, which are inevitable to progressive humanity, are bound to result in social prosperity.

But human laws which are not in harmony with natural law, have intervened ; yet the natural law still operates, only against, instead of for, social prosperity. That is to say, human legislation

has enabled men to break the law of reciprocity of services—has enabled a few to become rich by compelling the many to become poor. This is achieved by the legalising of monopolies—by the appropriation of the land and through that the diversion of wealth from its proper channels. But while human selfishness and short-sightedness have had their will, the natural law, that men seek to satisfy their desires with a minimum of exertion, has not been ignored with impunity. It may be, nay, it is, possible for some men to take away the existing proceeds of other men's labour, but it is out of the power of the exploiters to altogether determine how much wealth shall be produced in the future. The exploited, as they come to understand that they are being defrauded, instinctively and gradually lose their incentive to labour.

We can perceive the working of this natural law to-day—of millions of men, some unwilling and unable to do any work at all, and others unwilling and unable to do their work efficiently. Thus we are threatened with imminent social ruin.

It is clear that the application of human intelligence to production gives rise to exchange of goods and services, to the uniting of forces for common purposes. This is co-operation—the *sine qua non* of civilisation. Of sheer necessity, under co-operation, each is obliged to consider to some extent the interests of others. A will not exchange his bread for B's boots, unless he is assured that

B is going to deal fairly by him. And yet we know that B will take advantage of A as often and as much as he dares. This is true in the simplest and directest forms of exchange as in the most indirect and complicated. All the same, the baker and the bootmaker both know that they each must in some measure serve the other, or there could be no exchange.

It may be that under 'Individualism' financiers, as rich as Cræsus, plot and plan to circumvent one another, as well as to exploit the crowd. But under State Socialism, two State officials are just as likely to attempt to supplant one another, in addition to manipulating the masses for their own ends. While under idealistic Socialism, where men put the proceeds of their labour into a common stock from whence all might draw what they needed as freely as children now gather blackberries, there would still be no guarantee that the man who desired to obtain something for nothing would have been evolved out of existence.

Most people acknowledge that the manner in which men compete and co-operate to-day is neither commendable nor desirable. But can it be said that the methods by which we seek to remedy the resulting evils are more justifiable? Can it be shown that there is any better spirit of co-operation manifested in the practical tendencies of Collectivism, than are exhibited in the 'individualistic' wrongs which are supposed to be righted?

Certain houses in a notoriously disgraceful slum

area in London were not very long ago condemned as unfit for human habitation. It is true that the 'local authorities' had the nominal power to prohibit the use of such dwellings until they were made fit for human habitation. But what happened? The Housing Committee of the London County Council proposed to pay to the owners of this property nearly £400 per hovel. But there is still the land to be reckoned with. The estimated value of $13\frac{1}{2}$ acres is at the rate of over £800 per acre for five acres at the centre, and between £600 and £700 per acre for the remainder; in all just over £100,000. So that because the people of London have been legally and systematically robbed, individually, for centuries, and the dwellings of many have slowly and surely become intolerable, they are now to be collectively penalised, ostensibly to put the matter right, but actually to compensate the robbers.

It is clear, in this case at any rate, that the co-operative spirit behind the collectivist remedy does not differ much from that which lies behind the 'individualistic' disease.

When all is said and done, the extent of benevolence, and the limit of rapacity, in any conceivable society, must always depend upon individual character. The quality of men's co-operative activities is not a question of Collectivism *versus* Commercialism or Individualism, but of the development and enlightenment of persons.

II

THE MEANING OF CIVILISATION

There is no essential difference between man and man the world over. There is only a difference of degree, not of kind; a difference not of power, but of use of power. And this difference is attained by extension of knowledge, and concentration and specialisation of skill—cumulation of power, the union of effort for mutual aid. This is what I understand by symbiosis, the normal function of a human being—the getting of one's living by helping other human beings.

This is not *entirely* peculiar to man, because, as Prince Kropotkin shows, mutual aid is practised by animals, insects, and even plants. And, just as we find symbiosis in a very marked degree in beings below man, as, for instance, bees, so we find it an almost negligible factor in some men (savages).

What is peculiar to man, however, is that, whereas in animal life mutualism is purely instinctive and not the normal function, in him it is the result of reason and is his normal function.

Henry George points out that if we analyse the way in which the extensions of man's power of getting, making, doing and knowing are gained, we cannot fail to see that they come not from changes in the individual man, but from the union of individual powers, initiated by man's reason and foresight.

It is by this that man is enabled, as Emerson says, to borrow the might of the elements. "The forces of steam, gravity, galvanism, light, magnets, wind, fire, serve us day by day, and cost us nothing." "This is the wisdom of man, in every instance of his labour, to hitch his wagon to a star."

Samuel Daniel, the poet, once wrote :

Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man !

The meaning, then, of civilisation lies in man's power to transcend himself, to become more than a man by becoming a co-operator.

A great Atlantic liner affords a fitting illustration of the stupendous material results of civilisation. In the building and furnishing of one of these 'floating cities' is represented nearly all the industries known to man. And, as

The pulses of her iron heart
Go beating through the storm,

she relates us through all the ramifications of exchange to all the sons of men.

Such results would have been impossible of production apart from an almost perfect system of co-operation on the part of the workers. A system of co-operation which has not come about by the conscious direction of any particular individual or individuals, but has grown and developed, gradually and unconsciously, out of man's instinct to satisfy his needs and desires in the quickest and easiest manner open to him. It has

grown and developed because of man's reason—the power of relating cause and effect, of thinking things out, and seeing ways through. This makes the world intelligible to man, and also brings it under his dominion.

Man has discovered that by exchange of goods and services he can add enormously to his productive powers. And this discovery has nothing whatever to do with any theories about collectivism. As a matter of fact, it has been purely individualistic in its tendencies. And there is no necessary connection between it and altruism. It is not, as a rule, because a man is unselfish that he yields up one thing for another, but because he has the intelligence to perceive that he can add to his stock of wealth by exchanging one desirable thing for another which is more desirable. This is easily apparent when we reflect upon primitive methods of exchange. But so spontaneous, unconscious, and complicated has co-operation become, that the modern civilised man hardly realises that his material life rests upon this fact of co-operation, that he could not exist apart from it.

The savage who shapes a canoe for himself out of a tree trunk, would undoubtedly be lost in admiration and wonder at a great modern steamship. He would regard one of its hundreds of firemen—one of the co-operative units necessary to the perfect working of this almost terrifyingly complicated and glorified canoe—he would regard him as a being endowed with vastly and transcendently enhanced productive powers compared with

his own. But cast this transcendent fireman, deprived of all the accessories of civilisation, on an island with the savage, and the chances are, that while the latter would be able to maintain himself in comparative ease and comfort, the former would find the utmost difficulty in supporting the barest existence apart from the aid of the savage. Although he came out of and assisted in the running of one of the fastest and finest ships afloat, his individual knowledge, skill and power would be unequal to the construction of the rudest and simplest kind of craft.¹

The civilised man has relinquished the primitive savage's power to be self-sufficient, in order to participate in the immeasurably greater power that comes with co-operation.

But what have the civilised men gained? Are not millions of them actually very much worse off than the veriest savage? Are they not starved, half-frozen, crowded together in hovels and fearfully overworked, while the savage is well fed, warm and happy?

The civilised man quite unconsciously arrived at the present fine division and combination of labour through his instinctive tendency to always satisfy his needs and desires by going the shortest and easiest way to work. But as I have said in a previous paper, it has occurred to some that the shortest and easiest way of all is to filch the proceeds of other men's work.

Whilst exchange of goods and services was in its

¹ Henry George.

infancy, the theft of the proceeds of another's labour could only be accomplished in a direct and more or less clumsy fashion. But as civilisation proceeds, increasingly complex methods of co-operation make it increasingly easy for cunning and unscrupulous men to indirectly and skilfully rob and exploit the unthinking masses.

What then, to repeat a former question, have the people gained by civilisation? Their real gain is a potential one. From a strictly limited point of view, they may be infinitely worse off than savages. But they have evolved, in this struggle for existence, a power and intelligence which is quite foreign to the savage. And they will actually, as well as potentially, come into their own as they become more enlightened—as they understand the operations of natural law in society, and voluntarily co-operate with *That*.

To return to the picture of the great Atlantic liner. The firemen in the stokehole shovel on coal by day and night, while the first-class saloon passenger—let us imagine him to be the 'owner' of the land from which the coal is extracted—does nothing but amuse himself. Yet during the voyage the latter manages to appropriate something like one thousand times more wealth (on account of the 70,000 tons¹ of coal used on the double journey) than one of the firemen, working under the most unenviable conditions, does in the

¹ This is from a calculation made of the coal used on the notorious 'record' journey of the *Mauretania* at Christmas 1910.

same time. And this first-class travelling 'land-owner' obtains this wealth because the people allow him to annex part of the proceeds of their labour in return for his allowing them to dig out of the earth (which *he* did not make) the very coals with which the firemen feed the furnaces that directly propel the vessel in which he so luxuriously travels.

It is this kind of public scandal which makes the Socialist's plea for collective ownership so plausible. Yet all that is really needed is not collective ownership but more 'common sense.' Were legal monopolies, which tax heavily the necessities of life and slyly divert wealth from its proper channels, not tolerated, then those services, which might conveniently and economically be communal, would become so by natural growth. And each man, enjoying the fruits of his own labour, would benefit by the public services, and joyfully contribute to their maintenance. Even to-day there are many public services which men uncomplainingly support and quite casually enjoy without even realising the full extent of their value. And there are many institutions of educative and recreative importance which are not nominally public property, but nevertheless public property in the best sense—benefits which the poor man might enjoy much more than he does were he not so obsessed by political bogies. This, however, is quite different from the universal conscription of labour involved in socialistic schemes.

III

COMPULSORY CO-OPERATION

If we consider the human body we may see exemplified in it two kinds of co-operation—internal and external.

Internal co-operation is subconscious and spontaneous. It comes about as the result of each organ involuntarily minding its own business, as part of an extremely complicated and delicate machine, working in response to the will of an infinite intelligence unknown to ordinary consciousness. The heart pumps blood, the lungs inspire and expire air, the digestive organs perform their functions. Each is concerned, so to speak, only with its own proper function, yet none could continue to function, for any length of time, apart from the continued functioning of the rest. Their co-operation is perfectly complete and completely subconscious. Moreover, as soon as the conscious attention of a human being is directed to the working of any separate organ it is a signal of distress. When we are breathing freely, for instance, we are not continually made aware of it. And there is no direct conscious satisfaction derived therefrom. The satisfaction is rather of a negative kind. It is the absence of direct discomfort, resulting in the ability to satisfy desires and experience pleasure. When the free action of the lungs is prevented, however, we *are* made aware

of it. We are then conscious of direct and very definite discomfort.

This subconscious co-operation is the functioning of seemingly independent organs each serving their own specific purposes while nevertheless united in one common aim—the health of the whole body.

External co-operation is conscious and directed. It comes about by certain members of the body harmoniously acting under the direction of one controlling will and intelligence. Suppose a man desires to cut down a tree. He wills the legs to walk, the eyes to observe, the brain to calculate, the hands to hold the axe. Moreover, if the man's conscious attention is diverted, his axe is apt to slip and dire accident to result.

This outer-co-operation is the voluntary movement of separate members under the control of one intelligence to effect a definite end—the desire of the man.

The involuntary functions, so long as their normal working is not interfered with, will never militate against bodily health; whereas the voluntary functions can, nay, often do, injure a man when he does not use them wisely. He may, for instance, sow and reap a field of barley, and then use it either to nourish or to poison his body. That is to say, he can turn it into wholesome food or use it in the production of a spirit with which to intoxicate himself.

Two kinds of co-operation, somewhat analogous to the two described above, are always going on in the body politic.

The first one always takes place in the building and furnishing of every great steamship—which is indeed but the great ship of civilisation in miniature. Our great liners exist only because millions of men each minds his own business, as part of an extremely sensitive and complex machine, working in response to an infinite will and intelligence. Some men are engaged in cutting down trees, others in mining and smelting iron and copper, others again in converting these into tools, machinery and the various parts and materials which comprise such a vessel. Each is concerned with his own particular task, yet none could continue for any length of time apart from the continued activity of the others.¹ This system of co-operation is complete, and, metaphorically speaking, completely subconscious. Moreover, we know that when the conscious attention of society is directed (which happens continually) to these, so to speak, subconscious parts, viz. particular industries, it is always a sign of distress. If the great vital processes of the body politic (the essential industries) were proceeding harmoniously, public attention would not be drawn to them.

This subconscious co-operation consists in the industry of seemingly independent units, each seeking the satisfaction of his individual desires, practically ignorant of the general result, yet nevertheless united in one common aim—the well-being of the body politic.

The second kind of co-operation, *i.e.* the ex-

¹ Like all analogies, this will break down if carried to extremes,

ternal, takes place, for example, in the navigation of a vessel, which can only travel from port to port because of the united voluntary efforts of many individuals in response to the directing will and intelligence of the captain. The subordination of the many to the one is as essential to the proper management of a vessel as the conscious control of a man's limbs, etc., is essential to the felling of a tree. And the slackening of such control would be as disastrous in the one case as the other.

This conscious co-operation is the voluntary submission of the many to the directing intelligence of the one, in order to effect a definite end—the movement of the vessel and its safety.

It is necessary here to emphasise the fact that the normal working of industrial life implies the equal access of individuals to natural resources on the one hand, and individual integrity on the other. The freedom of every man to mind his own business, and the recognition by each man of the duty to render to society at least an equivalent for what he receives, and to refrain from attempts to obtain something for nothing, would secure social well-being for the whole body politic.

Now, just as men by voluntary acts destroy the health of their bodies, so does society by its voluntary acts destroy the health of the body politic. The institution of land and other monopolies destroys the possibility of equal opportunity for all, and makes possible evasion of the duty of reciprocal service,

The great collectivist delusion is: that men, seeing this impediment to spontaneous subconscious co-operation, imagine that the remedy lies in the substitution of conscious and directed co-operation in the wrong place. As well might a man who has disturbed the equilibrium of his digestive processes by overfeeding, imagine that health could be restored by attempts to gain conscious control of his internal organs instead of by the regulation of his appetite.

Henry George says: "To attempt to apply that kind of co-operation which requires direction from without to the work proper for that kind of co-operation which requires direction from within, is like asking the carpenter who can build a chicken-house to build a chicken also."

The ill-considered remedy of collectivism can only result in the confirmation of the evils sought to be remedied and the hindering of the good sought to be established. Although the present system of society has produced land monopoly and financial jobbery, misnamed 'capitalism,' it must yet be remembered that, like the human body, it has grown and not been made. Society, like many a man's body, has become distorted by unnatural burdens and restrictions. When it is freed from the fetters of land monopoly and other unfair restrictions, it will be found capable of developing universal free co-operation, with no limit to intellectual and moral improvement.

V

COMPETITION AND CAPITALISM

The great fallacy underlying all socialistic arguments is that the exploitation and oppression of the people are entirely due to competition and capitalism. But if the literature of Socialism is searched for reasonable arguments on the side of these contentions, the result is nil. And the place of such arguments is taken up with mere assertions as to the degrading influences of competition, and the chaos caused by capitalism. Moreover, in the very sentences which virtually repudiate laws of Nature and natural right, we are asked to accept the 'Science of Socialism.'

I propose now to deal with two of these familiar fallacies and to show that legalised monopolies interfere with the equal rights of men by giving special privileges to some, thus *limiting* normal healthy competition. And that the remedy is not the piling on of more restrictions and the creation of greater monopolies, but the destruction of monopolies and the removal of restrictions.

COMPETITION

It is usually assumed that competition and co-operation are antagonistic. But this assumption is untrue. In reality they are interdependent, and social welfare depends upon the maintenance of a true equilibrium. Competition and co-operation have been thrown out of equilibrium by the

creation of monopolies. The result is corruption and chaos, disease and misery.

In the internal co-operation of the human body, which, as we saw above, is analogous to that which takes place in the body politic, we may see how the principle of competition is involved with that very co-operation. We cannot say that competition in this case is an arbitrary interference with Nature. It is impossible not to see and understand the vital necessity of it. It is true that the co-operation is the functioning of seemingly independent organs united to procure the welfare of the whole body. And it is also true that the welfare of the whole body depends upon a due proportion of competition. That is to say, the supply of nutriment to each organ is proportionate to its competition for blood supply. Increase of function means increase of blood supply, and increase of blood supply means further development (within limits) of the organ. This truth is demonstrated every time a man performs physical exercises in order to increase the size and strength of a particular organ. More blood is drawn to the part in response to its increased activity. We do not know what fine shades of motive underlie the competition of the several parts of the human organism for the supply of nutrition. But we do know that the welfare of the entire organism depends upon that fine balance between different powers of the organs, which again depends upon their subconscious competition. We can see that the very unity of the organs depends, so to speak,

upon their individualism. If any restriction interferes with this individualism, the unity is dissolved, because the competition as well as the co-operation is restricted.

A wise physician knows that his work consists in restoring the equilibrium between the two. He would not advocate uniformity of functioning as a remedy for impaired unity.

The same principle of orderly individual functioning through competitive co-operation within each man finds a parallel in human society, or would do so if all forms of legal restriction were removed. In the 'getting of livings' under normal conditions, the amount of wealth flowing to each individual would be proportionate to the amount of energy put forth. And as the activities of the stronger man would naturally be greater than those of the weaker, he would as naturally require *and* receive a larger amount of sustenance. But though this undoubtedly implies competition, it is not to the detriment, or at the expense of, the weaker man. Given *equal opportunities*, the stronger, or more capable, man may be able to wrest from the forces of Nature wealth equivalent to, say, £500 per annum, while the less capable can produce only £200. Working separately, their united incomes make £700 per annum.

Suppose that the more capable man discovers that by joining forces they could produce in the same time £1,400 per annum. No injustice would be done if he employed the less capable man to assist him at a wage of £400 per annum, keeping

£1,000 for himself. He, his employee, and the community generally, would *all* be the richer. If the less capable man did not benefit by the change he would not cease his separate labour in order to become an employee. While if the more capable man is to be deprived of the results of his superior ability in order that they may be, directly or indirectly, bestowed on the less capable, it is a direct encouragement to the less desirable types to increase and multiply at the expense of the more desirable. Free competition, moreover, does more than secure to the producer the legitimate reward of his activity. It secures to every man the best possible return for the wealth he exchanges for other produce.

Take the case of any common manufactured article regularly demanded by the community, boots for example. The man who produces the best boots at the lowest price will, in the long run, sell the most boots. As one man, however, cannot supply boots for the whole community, the producers of inferior goods may continue to receive orders for boots, but will not be able to obtain the same price as the first manufacturer. Whilst when the supply exceeds the demand it is the least capable, both among masters and men, who are left without boots to manufacture and are forced to seek occupations for which they are better fitted.

It is true that under present conditions such men often fail to find any work open to them at a living wage, and are driven to undercut one another—offer their labour at bare subsistence wages—in their handicapped struggle for existence,

But that is the fault of legal restrictions and monopolies, not of competition and capitalism. What holds good in the manufacture of boots, holds good of all other trades and occupations. Given natural conditions, the surplus army of inferior shoemakers, bakers, tailors, weavers, smiths, fruit-growers and agriculturists could sort themselves out, exchange the occupations for which they were less fitted for those for which they were more fitted, and thus supply each other's needs through the normal process of exchange. What prevents them from doing this now is the impossibility of obtaining land to live and work upon, together with the restrictions placed upon trade and labour by the existence of land and other legalised monopolies.

CAPITALISM

Socialists say it is capitalism that is the root of the evil. But capitalism, *i.e.* the possession of wealth to be used in the production of more wealth, is powerless for harm in the absence of, if I may coin a word, 'monopolism.' Given this absence, the capitalist who overcharged for his services, and underpaid his workmen, would soon be forced to raise wages and lower his prices by the coming into the field of other capitalists offering goods at more reasonable rates, and their workmen better pay. Capitalists would compete with one another for workmen as well as to sell their goods. Virtually it is labour which employs capital, not capital which employs labour,

It is not capitalism, but 'monopolism' or 'propriatorism'—the power to exact something for nothing—that is the root of all economic evil.

If, for example, a legal enactment decrees that no one but a certain Reginald Browne shall manufacture and sell cups and saucers, the said Reginald Browne can charge what he pleases for cups and saucers, quite regardless of their real value. He may charge £5 per cup and saucer worth fivepence, and the consumers have no remedy. They may indeed abandon the use of cups and saucers, and make shift with tumblers, and so escape the imposition upon them of a tax of £4 19s. 7d., because cups and saucers are not a vital necessity. But substitute for cups and saucers wheat, or, what is equivalent, *permission to use the land on which wheat is grown, or ground, or baked, or landed, or exchanged*, and the people are powerless. Because 'monopolism' has become more subtle and complex than, say, mere restrictions upon the sale of cups and saucers, it is not to say that capitalism is the cause of the fundamental injustice.

Land and Capital are too often confused. Capital is perishable. The capitalist must pay, and pay the true and adequate wages of labour, if he needs the assistance of others to preserve and increase his wealth. He can get this assistance for less than its true worth only when backed by something other than mere capital. He can get it only when legal enactments, supported by force of arms, enable some men to pocket huge quantities of communal wealth representing ground rents,

mining royalties, and such legalised tributes, for example, as the monopoly prices charged by railway companies. In addition there is the heavy tribute exacted by rings, pools, and trusts, which are found on examination to owe their success not to capitalism *qua* capitalism, but to legal privilege, such as property in land which is advantageously situated or exceptionally productive (for which the 'capitalists' pay no unearned increment duty either to landlord or community, so that they are then in the position of land monopolists). Power over those who own rights of transportation, or similar legalised prevention of free competition, is another prolific source of exploitation possessed by rings and pools and trusts. More often than not it is a combination of many privileges.

It is true that when the Socialist talks of capitalism, he means not only true capitalism, but also the possession by individuals, or groups of individuals, of all monopoly rights. But it is very important that the real should not be confounded with the spurious capitalism, which simply consists in power given by the State to certain persons to levy huge tributes on all the rest. Socialists know and even agree that 'Landlordism,' 'Law-lordism' and 'War-lordism' are one and the same thing under different aspects—the power to take something for nothing.

In order to remedy this state of things Socialists do not propose to restore the normal equilibrium between competition and co-operation by the abolition of landlordism and other State-supported

monopolies. They propose to create one huge monopoly, to enormously increase the burden of man-made laws, in place of removing the obstructions to the harmonious working of natural law. As well might a physician think he could take over the control of the great pumping station of the blood, as statesmen imagine that they can undertake the superintendence of the distribution of wealth. The result would mean death in both cases.

And Socialists have the effrontery to call their proposed system scientific! A scientific system can only be one which utilises natural law for the supplying of the needs of men.

(2) *THE BALLOT-BOX DELUSION*

I

CUSTOM AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT

IN order to understand the ballot-box delusion—to realise that we are not governed, nor do we govern ourselves, by votes, it is necessary that we understand the difference between public opinion and custom on the one hand, and civil government on the other. Civil government may be the outcome—it certainly is not the cause—of public opinion and custom. The civil government of a people, its laws and institutions, depend upon the state or degree of its civilisation. And although the word civilisation comes from the same root-word, *civis*, a city, its significance is much vaster than the term civil government.

The word civilisation is one on the tips of men's tongues. Yet, as Henry George shows, there is a vagueness of meaning attached to it hardly to be matched by any other word. It presents difficulties not only to common people, but to the ablest historians and best writers. To some people the word conveys the idea of wealth and spread of knowledge; to others, industrial development and control of natural forces; to others again, kindness and a sense of justice; and yet again to others, beneficent laws and institutions. To the Imperialist I suppose it is a peculiar British quality, which it is his mission to spread. Henry George quotes a satire which tells "how men who had lost their way in the wilderness exclaimed at length, when they reached a prison, 'Thank God we are at last in civilisation.'"

Some people, upon whom the fact that civilisation and prisons seem to rise and flourish together has impressed itself deeply, have likened civilisation to a disease. Edward Carpenter, a powerful exponent of this view, shows also "that the word is sometimes used in an ideal sense, as to indicate a state of future culture towards which we are tending—the implied assumption being that a sufficiently long course of top-hats and telephones will in the end bring us to this ideal condition."

Nevertheless, the word *does* stand for something better, actually as well as ideally. And I believe the attitude of the 'man on the street' covers most of the ground, after all. He has a way of seeing through things when often the man of

learning can only see over them. He sees what is the real distinction between the words savage and civilised, that it is a moral distinction, not a material one. When the common man says 'civilised,' he refers to something which means justice or kindness, something even more than mere politeness. When he says 'savage,' he means something contrary to kindness and justice. Civilisation certainly means more than this; but this is its highest aspect, this the direction in which it is tending—to greater regard for the rights of others and more sympathy with them.¹

The word civilisation stands for something earlier and vastly more important than civil government, although it is from that that it takes its name. Before all cities and states there must have been potential citizens—civilised men—apart from them there could be no cities and states. The character of a particular civilisation may be represented by states, but the former is the essential thing. On the other hand, rulers may tie men up under states and empires, but they cannot eradicate the marks of men's civilisation. The civilisation eludes them and overrides them.

England and India are quite distinct in their civilisations, but are ruled by one power. Nevertheless, George the Fifth did not turn into an Indian by becoming Emperor of India, nor are the Indians converted into Britishers by the very doubtful expedient of compelling them to own allegiance to George the Fifth.

¹ Henry George.

England is supposed to be governing India ; but ' she ' does not really govern. As a matter of fact, ' she ' is not there to govern, but to exploit. ' She ' is there for purposes of revenue and commerce, and has succeeded in making an elaborate muddle of India's civil government. But despite the muddle and the oppression, the civil government is moulded, more or less, by public opinion (the more articulate public opinion becomes, the more it influences the legislature). And laws which are tolerated and may be applicable in India would certainly not be tolerated here, and *vice versa*. It is the character of the civilisation which counts. This truth was, curiously enough, admitted by Mr. F. E. Smith in his parliamentary speech in July 1910 against votes for women, in which he reminded the House of Commons that " millions of our Indian fellow-subjects are unenfranchised," and that it was quite impossible to expect to govern India by laws which obtained in England.

A few sentences further on occurred a rather remarkable admission. " Suppose," he said, " as the result of an alliance between Mrs. Pankhurst and Sir Thomas Whittaker, every public-house in the country was directed to be closed, in the teeth of a strong majority of males, do you suppose the men of the country would be satisfied ? They would not dream of it, and you would be brought to the verge of anarchy." We can dismiss Mr. Smith's illustration with a smile, but we might do well to ponder the truth which it illustrates. It may be possible to get a majority in the Houses

of Parliament in favour of a certain measure ; but if the great mass of popular opinion is really and definitely against it, *the rulers themselves know better than to enforce it.* Their persistence in power must depend always on the people's gullibility. And if the women suffragists have done nothing else, they have at least caused the political game to be inadvertently given away.

II

GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT

There is a proverb to the effect that a man who rules himself is greater than he who rules a city. In the light of 'modern progress' this proverb seems rather silly. It is not considered the thing nowadays to rule oneself. We have moved beyond that. The thing is to let the city rule us while we think about ruling the city.

Most modern legislation is merely the piling-up of statutes sanctioning the limitation of individual responsibility and initiative, and the extension of State control. This is because men are fast becoming incapable of controlling themselves. It would seem, then, that loss of self-control qualifies a man for participating in the government of cities and states. Men who cannot properly mind their own business are called upon to have a finger in that of other people.

When the case is put in this way, of course, men don't believe it. They know the people do

not really participate in the management of cities. And they are right. When men are confronted with a bald paraphrase of an epithet designed to deceive people, they recognise the truth. But nevertheless, as was pointed out in a preliminary paper, in the case of 'Free Education,' so with the term 'Self-Government,' the crowd is captivated by the sound notwithstanding its apprehension of the meaning. Thus we have the spectacle of men being deluded into thinking that because they obey governments they are necessarily obeying themselves, and because they elect their rulers therefore they are free.

It is true the people do not rule the cities in which they live and work. It is true they do not control themselves. Even the conditions considered by governments to be most favourable for taking the people's decision as to the men who shall represent them are those least favourable to self-control. The electorate are not wanted to become self-controlled ; they are deliberately put into a state of tension and passion, and then, while prejudice is strong, asked to put a cross against one or other of various names.

The franchise is not a charter of freedom. It is an arrangement which, in our particular state of political evolution, is found necessary for pacifying the people. The ballot-box is not a symbol of self-government. It is a convenient device for obtaining the consent of the governed.

I remember sitting one evening in December 1909 in the chamber of the Russian Duma and

thinking what splendid subterfuges such political palavers are. I remember being told by several persons in St. Petersburg that the Russian people were settling down into a state of deep depression and despair. And there was the Duma, the supposed symbol of the people's emancipation, ratifying some of the most diabolical measures for their oppression !

The Russian government resisted for as long as possible the demands of the Russian people for justice and liberty. After street fights, pogroms, massacres, executions and imprisonments, the petition only of a small section of the Russian people was granted, and the beginnings of such political institutions as we have in Western Europe established. And one of the first acts of the Duma was to confirm the Government's decree for the destruction of that very thing in Finland which the Duma is supposed to represent for Russia, viz. constitutional government. The Russian people asked for bread and they were given a stone.

The same thing has taken, and is taking, place in England. After all our franchises, free speech, free trade, free education, the people are still oppressed and driven to the verge of desperation. Instead of their natural rights being restored to them, they were goaded, only quite recently, into quarrelling and fighting over the question whether after all their so-called political freedom really means anything to them ; whether the last word in all legislation is with those who ostensibly represent them or with those who are in fact their

rulers. The House of Lords question and women's suffrage, and all such questions, are made convenient dummies for diverting the attention of the voters. They act, as it were, like the discs of the practised hypnotiser.

“But why,” some one may ask, “if what you say is true, that the franchise is such an ineffectual tool in the hands of the people—why is it not more readily extended to women and thus so much agitation and opposition obviated?” It might as well be asked why the hawker of mysterious envelopes at the street corner tempts the unwary public to pay him tribute by means of a trick. He tells the crowd, with much eloquence, that he has a pamphlet (nicely concealed in an envelope) which he cannot afford to give away and must not sell because of its contents. Unhealthy, morbid-minded persons are caught by the trick. They are held spell-bound, so that when he explains how purchasers of scraps of newspaper for sixpence can obtain a pamphlet as a free gift, they rush to secure it. The pamphlet they receive consists of a few printed pages of quite innocuous reading—a mere delusion and a snare. But the man is not out for the public's benefit. He is out after their sixpences, and if he did not adopt that method he would have to give them value for their money.

The rulers of England are not out to benefit the public. They are descendants of those who have robbed the people of their birthright. And they intend to stick to it. Were the people not deceived into thinking that when they are fighting for the

franchise they are fighting for something real, and that whatever is gained is granted as a privilege, something tangible might have to be yielded to them. The fraud of the franchise is much more insidious, successful and harmful than that of the deceptive envelope. And the hawker and the rulers alike think themselves justified.

In the last paper I said that if the women suffragists have done nothing else, they have at least caused the political game to be given away. They have caused some cynical and indifferent statesmen to tell the truth, even although they have caused others to tell fairy tales.

Mr. Balfour told the House of Commons, on the 12th of July 1910, that his view was "that democracy, properly understood, is government by consent, broadly speaking." He interpreted the "broadly speaking" as meaning that he would not dream of extending the franchise until the majority of any given class demanding it considered itself outraged by being excluded. He would not then give it as a right, but as a privilege. He would not let it be thought that a vote was a prize easily to be won, but that when things reached such a pass that government became difficult without giving it, then he would give it. And he holds this view because he believes the franchise to be of no value to those who already possess it. It is merely a convenient method of governing the people. That is to say, government by consent is easy and secure; government without consent is tedious and risky.

Social reformers will do well to bear in mind Mr. Balfour's opinion of the effect of the franchise upon social reform :

“ I am one of those who do not believe that the enfranchisement of women will have any important effect upon their material welfare. I cannot honestly say that I believe it will raise their wages, or that it would cause schemes of social reform to take a different complexion or be cast in a different shape. I do not believe that the movement of social reform which has characterised our legislation the last seventy years is due to the changes in the franchise which have occurred in that time or before. The first trades unions were called into existence under a Tory Administration, before the first Reform Bill of 1832. The great series of Factory Acts dealing with the condition of the working classes was passed long before the extension of the franchise.”

While Mr. Balfour was quick to show that the franchise had little or no effect upon remedial legislation, he did not point out what did effect it. He seemed to infer that all remedial legislation was attributable to the growing intelligence and benevolence of the rulers. The truth is, of course, that it is brought about by the direct pressure of public opinion upon the legislature. The franchise is simply a means to put off, for as long as possible, those who need and are asking for something more substantial. Like mouse-traps that intercept unwary mice on their way to the larder, the

ballot-boxes are the government's mantraps set to intercept unwary democracy on its way to social justice.

The franchise involves the multiplication of injurious laws with the consequent overshadowing of real law ; the making of fresh laws, to counteract the effect of previous ones, in constant succession and in ever increasing complexity. And it is rapidly undermining that reasonable consciousness in man which, given free and full expression, works steadily and harmoniously towards greater and greater welfare.

The net result of most modern legislation is to destroy in one direction that which the people are seeking to establish in another. The people are really asking for freedom—freedom to earn a living, whereas their representatives are sanctioning in their name measures for limiting their liberty even in their own homes.

III

GOVERNMENT AND NATURAL LAW

Every living man presupposes a fundamental right—the right to life. Speaking absolutely, of course, there is no such right. Life at any moment may be taken from a man, and there is no court of appeal to which he may turn to uphold his supposed right. Paradoxically, however, it is from this very denial of the absolute right that the right of each man is established. Since, between themselves and God all men equally have no claim,

between man and man each man's claim is valid. The denial of the supreme right establishes the relative one.

All men born into the world are endowed with physical desires, the satisfaction of which depends upon physical exertion. And physical exertion is impossible without material to work upon and the means to sustain life. Man, as we know him to be constituted, cannot develop physically, mentally, morally or spiritually without the agency of the land and its natural supplements, air, water and sunshine. Therefore, although before that Power which brings us into life all men stand equally claimless, in the sight of his fellows each man has an equal right to the natural gifts. And he who denies this natural right is morally wrong.

From this standpoint, it must be admitted that there are a large number of men who are morally wrong, Mr. F. E. Smith, M.P., included. Mr. Smith believes the idea of natural rights is as dead as Rousseau.

We might, for the sake of argument, concede Mr. Smith this, but it would necessitate our asking what kind of right he calls the right which he and his fellow-rulers arrogate to themselves of making laws for the people. Does he call this right an unnatural right? If so, I am in agreement with him. Nevertheless, I cannot help thinking that the idea of natural rights is not quite so dead as Mr. Smith makes out.

But it really is not the most important thing whether there are natural rights or not. What is

all-important to know can easily be discovered and understood by any one in possession of ordinary reasoning faculties. Let us assume there are no natural rights. But there *is* natural Law, which operates in all departments of life.

All natural laws are but so many facets of one great Law. There are laws which govern the movements of the planets, laws of physical health, and laws, if the masses of men did but know it, of social life.

Proudhon's sentence to the effect that it is the function of a statesman to *discover* laws, not to make them, has been quoted more than once, but it is well worth repeating. We acknowledge that the function of the physician is to discover laws of hygiene, not to make them. In the realm of physical science we understand and acknowledge that men cannot make laws, but must discover them. And we know by experience that these laws, known and unknown, cannot be ignored with impunity.

If we ignorantly or carelessly tamper with some kinds of electrical machines we may get electrocuted. If we ignorantly or carelessly devour poison we must take our chance of dying. All this everybody understands and acknowledges. But hitherto it has been neither understood nor acknowledged by the majority of people that there are natural laws of human association, the ignoring or misunderstanding of which must be, and inevitably is, attended by social disease and misery.

Much of our legislative activity is analogous to the action of medical advisers who prescribe purga-

tives and ointments for sufferers from stomach and skin troubles following upon persistent neglect of the simplest laws of hygiene. All of us are familiar with people who persistently over-feed upon rich indigestible food, until their skins break out into eruptions and their internal organs give them considerable discomfort. Then they visit a chemist's shop and buy ointments for the skin and purgatives for the stomach. Such people often take one drug after another, each one stronger than the last, and each one ignorantly taken to combat what are really the cumulative effects of previous ones. Only when it is too late (if at all) is it discovered that the so-called remedies are worse than the disease.

So it is with much of our present-day legislation. Suppressive and palliative measures are enforced upon the body politic even as they are enforced upon the body physical, and with equally disastrous results. Yet all that is needed is—to use the language of the Anglican Prayer Book—repentance and amendment. That is to say, a turning from the foolish actions, the ceasing to ignore the natural law in both instances. The healthy functioning would then inevitably follow.

Surely it is obvious, from our social miseries, that we must be ignoring some natural law or laws. But if this is so, it is equally obvious that taking votes as to what kind of legislation shall be enforced next, is equivalent to taking votes as to what kind of treatment shall be given next to physically sick persons.

We can understand that the ballot-box theory applied to medical treatment would only make diseases more distressing. Why should we not see, then, that the theory applied to politics is equally futile and makes 'confusion worse confounded'?

It is conceivable that the ballot-box might become a powerful instrument in the hands of chemists concerned with maintaining their lucrative positions, and at the same time keeping at bay a clamorous and sick population. But it could not bring us physical health any more than, in the other case, it produces material prosperity and social well-being.

To use another illustration: in order that a ship may get safely from one port to another certain laws of navigation must be understood and conformed to. The crew obey the captain, not because he has made those laws, but simply because he understands them. The ballot-box might prove an excellent device for keeping the ship's crew in order, as Carlyle has somewhere pointed out, but it certainly would not enable the vessel to be taken into port.

Let us suppose a crew, a percentage of whom are trained and armed for the special purpose of compelling the others, should they prove disinclined, to obey some irksome orders of the captain. The latter would have this crew at his mercy. He would no longer be obeyed because he understands the laws of navigation, but because the crew have no choice so long as a percentage of them consent to coerce the others. Under such

conditions an ignorant or drunken captain might run the vessel on the rocks, and the crew be powerless to prevent him. And all the palaver and balloting in the world would not destroy their servitude or minimise their discomfort. It would only confirm both.

The one word that cannot possibly express the condition of such a crew, is the word freedom. And yet into such mental and moral confusion have we got that our position, while it is worse than that of such a crew, is actually boasted of as free.

I am not so well acquainted with the French people as Mr. G. K. Chesterton, so that I cannot say whether they are in the habit of boasting of their freedom; but he boasts for them. In the very same paper which reported the almost complete success of governmental tyranny in France, we learned from Mr. Chesterton that the Frenchman is free. He deduces this from the fact that certain of the bourgeoisie have built some very ugly villas on the seashore.

The French people, I believe, have adult male suffrage. They also have conscription. Notwithstanding, however, that by the franchise they have the privilege of electing many specimens of French politicians, including Socialists, to the Chamber; and, notwithstanding that by conscription they ostensibly defend themselves against the 'wicked Germans,' they are on occasions forced, by the very machinery which they themselves comprise, to perform work under conditions which, in their capacity of ordinary workmen, they occasionally strike against. Both the ballot-box, by

which they are supposed to govern themselves, and the army, which is supposed to protect them against foes, are actually turned against them.

Conceive the irony of the position of the railwaymen in France. These men came out on strike in the summer of 1910, just as the English railwaymen came out in the summer of 1911, as every one knows, for better wages. The dislocation of trade and traffic thus caused was so serious that the strikers had every prospect of success. But the trump-card lay with the rulers of France, because they possessed what the workers of France had long ago given them, viz. the power to compel strikers to do *as conscripts* what they were refusing to do as railwaymen. The same thing was virtually true of England.

Conceive, further, the irony of the fact that the very man, M. Aristide Briand—who was once an organising official of a revolutionary party, and who probably had as much as any one to do with educating the railwaymen up to the idea of the general strike—as Premier of the French Republic, called up the strikers as conscripts to ‘cut their own throats.’

Here we see the force of Mr. F. E. Smith’s argument about natural rights being as dead as Rousseau, and the vote as a determining factor in legislation being valueless, and the power behind the vote, the power which can make the vote null and void, being the power of the rifle. They who control the rifles own the power of government.

One may ask: “What are you going to put in place of the ballot-box?” My answer is: the direct force of an educated and enlightened public

opinion. No government ever has, or ever can resist this power, given it be widespread enough. Even as it is, what we are supposed to get *via* the franchise is only granted because of the force of public opinion. The franchise merely prevents the true expression of, and enables the government to evade, the people's will. So ingenious are the subterfuges at work between the people and Parliament, and between Parliament and the rulers, that the latter can so distort what the people ask for, and so divert the current of popular feeling, as to utilise all the force while ignoring the demands.

I believe that what is needed for the right ordering of social life, for the relief of our social diseases, is that men should turn their attention right away from the making and enforcing of laws to the discovery and observance of Law.

When a party of musicians are proficient enough in the use of their special instruments to form an orchestra, they have no difficulty, as a rule, in finding the right conductor. When the individuals comprising societies understand the difference between rule and coercion and true and false education—true and false values generally—they will have no difficulty in finding the right ruler—measurer, administrator.

The remark of that eminent scientist, Jesus Christ, to the effect that if the Kingdom of God and His righteousness—right manner of action—be first sought, all necessary things will be added, is not a pious platitude, but a profound truth.

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